

Appendix (to be included as On-line Supplemental Material)**Thought stimuli and piloting.**

Thought stimuli. The thought suppression paradigm used in the current study was adapted from a widely used paradigm to measure the recurrence of intrusive thoughts (e.g., Corcoran & Woody, 2009; Wegner, Schneider, Carter, & White, 1987; Wenzlaff & Wegner, 2000). To generate the age-relevant thoughts, we focused on research showing that older and younger adults report different goals and life concerns (e.g., Socioemotional Selectivity Theory; Carstensen, 1993, 1995). Specifically, older adults emphasize fears about declining cognitive ability (Dark-Freudeman, West, & Viverito, 2006; Reese, Cherry, & Norris, 1999), whereas younger adults are more concerned than older adults with acquiring knowledge and growth (Carstensen, 1993, 1995).

Pilot testing. Pilot testing was conducted prior to the primary study with a convenience sample of younger ($n = 20$) and older ($n = 17$) adults. These pilot participants did not then participate in the main study. They were asked to rate a series of thoughts on their relevance to younger and older adults, the degree to which each thought was distressing, and the frequency with which the individual had each thought. Participants gave relevance and distress ratings using a 9-point Likert scale (1=*Completely Irrelevant / Not at all Distressing*, 9=*Completely Relevant / Extremely Distressing*) and frequency ratings on a 7-point Likert scale (0=*Never*, 6=*About Once a Day*). Fifteen potential thoughts were written by the research team or drawn from past studies with similar thought suppression paradigms (e.g., Magee & Teachman, 2007; Rachman, Shafran, Mitchell, Trant, & Teachman, 1996).

Results indicated that both older and younger adults endorsed the thought “I could lose my memory and forget my friends and family” as being highly relevant for older adults (older adult sample: $M = 6.71$, $SD = 2.69$; younger adult sample: $M = 8.35$, $SD = .81$), and the thought “I will never succeed in my career” as being relevant for younger adults (older adults: $M = 5.18$, $SD = 3.05$; younger adults: $M = 6.90$, $SD = 1.62$). The selected age-neutral negative thought (“I

hope my friend gets in a car accident”) and age-neutral positive thought (“I hope I win the lottery”) were rated as not particularly relevant to the concerns of either age group [car accident thought: older adult relevance ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 2.22$), younger adult relevance ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 2.61$), lottery thought: older adult relevance ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 2.54$), younger adult relevance ($M = 5.61$, $SD = 2.10$)].

Regarding the distress ratings assigned to the thoughts, the memory loss thought was rated as equally distressing by both age groups (older adults: $M = 5.71$, $SD = 3.29$; younger adults: $M = 7.25$, $SD = 2.31$; $t(28.08) = 1.62$, $p = .116$, $d = -0.54$). On the contrary, younger adults ($M = 6.75$, $SD = 2.29$) rated the career success thought as significantly more distressing than did older adults ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 2.68$; $t(35) = 4.52$, $p = .000$, $d = 1.48$). The car accident thought was rated as distressing by both older ($M = 6.35$, $SD = 3.62$) and younger ($M = 8.30$, $SD = 1.26$) adults, though more so by younger adults ($t(19.29) = 2.11$, $p = .048$, $d = -0.72$). As expected, the lottery thought received equally low distress ratings by both age groups (older adults: $M = 2.81$, $SD = 2.40$; younger adults: $M = 1.80$, $SD = 1.11$; $t(20.06) = -1.56$, $p = .134$, $d = 0.54$).

Regarding the frequency with which participants experienced the thoughts, as expected, older adults ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 1.97$) reported experiencing the memory loss thought significantly more frequently than did younger adults ($M = 1.25$, $SD = 1.52$; $t(35) = -2.23$, $p = .032$, $d = 0.73$), and younger adults ($M = 2.30$, $SD = 1.75$) reported experiencing the career success thought more frequently than did older adults ($M = .76$, $SD = 1.49$; $t(35) = 2.85$, $p = .007$, $d = 0.95$). Note, however, that participants reported experiencing each of these thoughts on average only once every 6-12 months. Last, as expected, there was no age difference in the frequency with which participants reported experiencing the age-neutral thoughts (car accident thought: older adults: $M = 0.00$, $SD = 0.00$; younger adults: $M = 0.00$, $SD = 0.00$; lottery thought: older adults: $M = 1.24$, $SD = 1.52$; younger adults: $M = 1.35$, $SD = 1.14$; $t(35) = .26$, $p = .795$, $d = -0.08$).